



At the Funeral of Dr. Martin Aaron Fischer

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**At the Funeral of
Dr. Martin Aaron Fischer**
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INDEED "BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER, devoted grandfather, revered and marvelous teacher, distinguished psychiatrist," founder of important new institutions in the life of Canada, and – perhaps most important – leading and and superb *psychoanalyst*, and supreme and incomparable, literally peerless, friend.

Today, with his corporal death, is a lamp gone out in Israel, and a light from the life of men. Today is all of Canada – indeed, all the world – so greatly the poorer. We who well know him, know no consolation; we who lived in the light he shed and the warmth he radiated, are left desolate and weeping, orphaned and not yet fully conscious of our orphaning.

But, as usual, not entirely and not quite.

For all of us who are left – those who are here, and those who cannot be here – numbered in the many hundreds, are as children of the same father, and so siblings – and so potential comforters of each other. In this at least, then, he is not dead; he lives in us, and indeed, in our friends, and, even more, our children, our posterity to the farthest reach of time.

* * *

Others, having spoken so eloquently here of him in his other capacities, I should like to speak of him with special emphasis in his role as Psychoanalyst (and "Art Therapist" and "Group Therapist") and *Weltmensch*, though in his real life there was scant separation of roles or *Lebenswesen*.

Without detracting at all – how could one? – from the uniqueness of the Hitlerian Holocaust, I must say that another, less visible, less audible, more accepted, more multi-authored, more lasting and more

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ancient, holocaust has been going on, has gone and is still going on beside it, and before it and after. I refer to the newly surfacing and newly appreciated, the epidemic, abuse of children – the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of them. The authors of this unrelenting torture and slaughter of the innocent are parents, teachers, penal personnel, holders of petty powers over the powerless – “adults” who were themselves, for much the greater part, themselves abused in their own childhoods.

And the two forms of holocaust are deeply connected. It is not, of course, true that every abused child becomes a leader or follower in a movement of massive torment, torture and murder of populations. But it is true – it is becoming increasingly evident – that every such leader or executor of mass murder (modernized and industrialized) was himself an abused child: in our day, Hitler, Mengele (and all the higher-ranking Nazis), Stalin (and much of his entourage), Idi Amin . . . all the persons who patiently and with zeal and craft, organized the mass torture and systematic massacres of our time – all of them badly abused children, unconsciously visiting upon their world the rage and hate they properly felt for the authors of their own abuse – usually parents and teachers, often both.

Out of that same mold that gave the world Hitler, came Freud – and Martin Fischer!

Freud's contribution to history (no matter what divisions in psychoanalysis now exist) was the recognition of “the unconscious” – the recognition that in all of humanity, that *universally*, experiences which are too painful to deal with immediately, are commonly “repressed,” but remain powerfully in the mind. They remain, unknown to their host and victim, but in harmful ways disastrously effective, dedicated and doomed to achieve effective, massive self – and other destruction: at the very least, destined “mysteriously” to ensure lives stunted and robbed of far the greater part of their potential. And Freud, was also the discoverer of the only known effective cure: the recovery (in a special process, “psychoanalysis”) and hence, under the right circumstances, the rendering inoperative of these unconscious materials, otherwise steadily operating, life-long and soul-deep, as life-shapers and career motivators.

Psychoanalysis is a long and costly process. It is not out of the way now for two *thousand* or more hours of talk to pass between analyst and analysand (nearly all the analysand's talk). And the process is surrounded, first on the analyst's side and then on both, by an unremitting devotion to the discovery of truth, and again on the side of the analyst, by an invariant showing of faith in (and love for) the analysand.

The outcome, when successful, is a new person, who newly and for the first time knows himself (or herself), and *hence* knows the world and can know and love others.

What Freud began, Martin Fischer developed, adapted, improved and embellished. I do not know of anyone with whom he "worked" (as the current euphemism goes), who did not, in effect, "return from the grave," come back from the course of self or other destruction and unending pain, to a life more happy, fruitful and, in turn, life-giving than could previously have been imagined. All these become not only "healed persons," but also healers. And from them, Martin's influence – his love of truth and love of love itself – radiates in lines of indefinitely great distance and amplitude.

Thus the very horror that brought Martin to Canada as a refugee, endows this nation in this time with the very forces so widely and effectively dedicated to measures that (on a large scale and a small) move in eventually massive power to ensure that soon, if we persevere, the threat of either kind of holocaust shall vanish forever, from the earth.

* * *

Martin is my dearest friend – and both my son and my father. I am sad beyond describing, but happily bound to ensure that his memory burn as an eternal flame in my heart and the hearts of all those I can in any way reach, love, understand and restore, and his works and ways continue to warm, brighten and redeem for all ages both heaven and earth.

Amen. And Amen, And Amen.